

Raising a child is not easy. If a child has a serious emotional disturbance (SED), every step toward adulthood can be an uphill climb. For any family or single parent, the climb can seem overwhelming. So it's not unusual for parents of children with SED to feel alone, helpless, and uncertain about which way to turn.

What is a serious emotional disturbance (SED)?

SED includes a range of behavioral and emotional disorders severe enough to limit or interfere with a child's ability to function in the family, school, or community.



BUILDING ON EACH OTHER'S STRENGTHS.

For more information about the Idaho System of Care and services and support available in your area, call the Idaho CareLine by dialing 211 or 1-800-926-2588.

You also can contact the Idaho Federation of Families, an Idaho-based support organization for families with children affected by SED, on the Web at www.idffcmh.org or by calling 1-800-905-3436.

Costs associated with this publication are available from:



P.O. Box 83720 • 450 W. State Street • Boise, Idaho 83720

Helping
Idaho families
care for children
with serious
emotional
disturbances.



Developing a system of care so parents need never feel alone.

In communities throughout Idaho, caring people are coming together to help children with a serious emotional disturbance (SED) and their families make life's journey a little easier. This "system of care" is made up of individuals representing public and



private organizations, such as mental health, education, business, juvenile justice, and parent-advocacy groups.

Providing the services families need.

The Idaho System of Care serves families through individual child-serving agencies like the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare and children's mental health councils.

Councils play a vital role by helping families involved with multiple agencies coordinate services and support, make decisions, and reduce the impact of mental health disorders.



A family may contact council members directly or be referred by other families, clinicians, teachers, juvenile justice workers, or other community members. Once contact is made, a local council service coordinator meets with the family to explain the council process and answer questions.

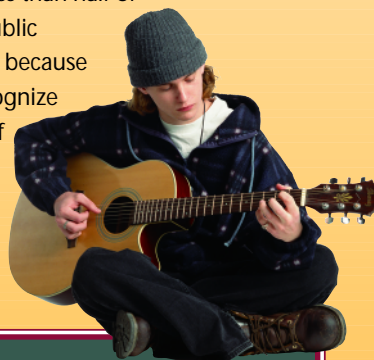
If the family chooses to work with their council, a support team is created to develop an effective treatment plan that is focused on the needs of the child and based on the strengths of the family.

The life of the plan and the relationship with the council are decisions made by the family. And that's what makes a community system of care so effective — it's child centered and family driven.

Recognizing the need is the first step toward providing the right care.

A community system of care is a powerful tool for meeting the physical, emotional, social, and educational needs of a child with SED. However, like any tool, it's of little value if it goes unused.

More than 17,000 children in Idaho live with a serious emotional disturbance, yet less than half of them receive help through public services. This difference exists because parents sometimes fail to recognize their child has a problem. Or if they suspect a problem, they may be reluctant to reach out for fear they will be blamed for their child's condition.



What is a system of care?

Services and support coordinated to help parents of a child with SED develop an effective care plan – with the assistance of individuals chosen by the family – that is tailored to the needs of the child and locally administered.



SED includes a range of emotional and behavioral disorders. Like physical diseases, they are most successfully treated when identified early. Early detection and treatment are in the best interests of the child and the parents. Knowing a child with SED is receiving appropriate care reduces the family's anxiety and stress, making life more enjoyable.

Systems of care are successful in communities across the nation. A recent study of 30 communities in other states found the majority of caregivers were pleased with their child's progress after one year in a system of care. In fact, more than 75 percent rated services as "good" to "excellent." Other studies indicate that children in a system of care function better at home, in school, and in the community.

In short, it's an approach that works – for children, parents, and communities.

